

gallon and there were 612 licensed scallop fishermen. This period marked the beginning of the modern bay scallop industry in North Carolina (Gutsell 1928).

The principle scallop grounds were Bogue and Core sounds, but occasionally, scallops were found at Hatteras and Ocracoke to the north, and in New River to the south. Fishermen waded on shoals and harvested the scallops by hand using a six-tined hand rake called a “potato or a peanut digger” with a wire basket fitted to retain the shellfish. Scoop nets were reported as a harvesting gear as early as 1897. A scoop is a wire ring about six inches in diameter with a mesh bag sewn onto it and attached to a wooden handle. Scallops are sighted on the bottom and “scooped up” until the bag is filled and then dumped into the boat or tub.

Fishermen also towed dredges with boats ranging in length from 18 to 35 feet. These dredges or “drags” were small toothless dredges about three feet wide with a twine bag that had holes in the upper part of it to allow sea grass to pass through. Dredges were attached to poles fastened across the gunwales of the boat and most vessels pulled four dredges at a time. Core Sound dredgers fastened the pole forward in the boat and towed the dredges even with the stern while Bogue Sound dredgers placed the pole well aft and towed the dredges well astern of the boat. The boats used in the scallop fishery were also used in crabbing and in other fishing ventures (Gutsell 1928).

The fishermen often shucked the scallops themselves with the help of family members. This was done at their homes or in specially constructed shucking houses built over the water. Dealers also provided shucking for a price. The adductor muscle (meat) was separated from the shells and viscera and placed in gallon containers. The shells and viscera were discarded, unless the viscera was used for fertilizer. Scallops harvested from Bogue and Core sounds were originally taken by boat to Morehead City and Beaufort, where almost all of the dealers were. Improvement in “Downeast” roads made shipment by truck possible in the 1920s and dealers established themselves in places like Marshallberg and Atlantic to purchase bay scallops. Nearly all shipments of North Carolina scallops were sent to New York and other northern cities (Gutsell 1928).

Regulation of the bay scallop industry began in 1915. In that year, the Shellfish Commission (which had originated in 1891) and the Fish Commission (which dated from the 1870s) were combined to form the North Carolina Fisheries Commission (Thorsen 1982). A scallop dealer’s license fee of \$5.00, an individual scallop fisherman’s fee of \$1.00, and a dealer’s tax of ten cents per gallon of meats were enacted in 1917. The laws passed by the Fisheries Commission concerning bay scallops in the 1915-1918 period included a minimum shell size of 2 inches from the hinge to the mouth, a closed scallop season from April 15 through December 15 to allow for spawning, the prohibition of steam powered vessels in the harvest of scallops and the prohibition of tongs in the “raking only” areas of the scallop grounds. The soaking or “swelling” of scallops in water to increase the weight of the individual meats was prohibited and the number of dredges allowed per boat was restricted. Area closures began in 1919 with dredges prohibited from Spooners Creek in Bogue Sound to the east end of Carrot Island in Beaufort. From 1922-24, an additional two weeks in December was added to the closed